

**Human Services Committee
Thursday, March 10, 2022**

**Public Hearing on:
SB 284 AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR
AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS**

Good morning distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB 284 An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for an Income-Eligible Person to Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status.

My name is Sabrina Trocchi and I am the President/Chief Executive Officer of Wheeler, Inc. Wheeler provides a comprehensive continuum of integrated primary care, mental health, and substance abuse recovery, community justice, education, child welfare, early childhood and prevention and wellness services to over 50,000 children, families, and adults in communities across Connecticut. Wheeler's federally qualified health centers in the Hartford, New Britain, Bristol, Waterbury, and Plainville communities serve approximately 16,000 medically underserved children, families, and adults and offer cost-effective integrated care aimed at improving health outcomes and the care experience of individuals served. The services we provide are highly effective in helping these individuals and families function successfully in the community.

Senate Bill 284 seeks to expand HUSKY health coverage to children up to the age of 18 regardless of immigration status. This bill would increase the number of children who can be covered under HUSKY and will have a tremendous impact on health equity.

Expanding eligibility will help equalize access to health care coverage and help reduce the uninsured rate in Connecticut. Last year the state of Connecticut expanded access to HUSKY to children ages 0-8 years. Passage of SB 284 this year would ensure that children will not age out of coverage once they turn 9 years old and be left without healthcare.

Community Health Centers, like Wheeler, treat many patients who are uninsured or underinsured. We are keenly aware of the barriers to care for individuals who do not have health insurance. We fully support passage of SB 284 this year and we welcome the opportunity to work with the legislature to expand access to health insurance for undocumented Connecticut residents in upcoming legislative sessions.

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Respectfully,

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